

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 02308 230205Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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O R 230135Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6721  
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO  
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 2308

EXDIS

EO 11652 GDS  
TAGS OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY), BR US  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT: MEETING WITH CARDINAL ARNS

REF A. 77 STATE 310916; B. SAO PAULO 663 C. SAO PAULO 819

1. CONGEN SAO PAULO HAS BEEN INFORMED BY REPORTER FOR NATIONAL CIRCULATION NEWS MAGAZINE "ISTO E" (SOMETHING LIKE NEWSWEEK) THAT MAGAZINE PLANS TO PUBLISH FULL TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECEMBER 28, 1977, LETTER TO CARDINAL ARNS IN THIS WEEK'S EDITION. MATERIAL GOES TO THE PRINTERS FRIDAY, MARCH 24, AND ISSUE WILL BE ON NEWSSTANDS SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 25.

2. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, PRESS HAS PUBLISHED ALL BUT FIRST SENTENCE OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER. THAT SENTENCE READS: "THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF OCTOBER 29, BRINGING TO MY ATTENTION THE LIST OF BRAZILIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO HAVE DISAPPEARED SINCE 1971" (77 STATE 310916).

3. "ISTO E" REPORTER SAID MAGAZINE ALSO PLANS TO PUBLISH THE LIST REFERRED TO ABOVE UNLESS THE MAGAZINE "RECEIVES A CONTRARY INDICATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT". SINCE THERE IS NO PRIOR CENSORSHIP ON MAGAZINE, WE ASSUME REPORTER WAS REFERRING TO POST-PUBLICATION  
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PROBLEMS GOVERNMENT COULD CAUSE MAGAZINE, E.G., SEIZING EDITION, ECONOMIC PRESSURES, ETC.

4. CONGEN SAO PAULO SPECULATES THAT BOTH TEXT OF CARDINAL'S LETTER AND ACCOMPANYING LIST WERE FURNISHED BY REV. JAMES NELSON WRIGHT, WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE WAS THE SOURCE OF FOLHA DE SAO PAULO ARTICLES ON LETTER EARLIER THIS MONTH (SAO

PAULO 663).

5. WE CAN ONLY GUESS AS TO WRIGHT'S MOTIVES IN PROVIDING "ISTO E" WITH LIST IT PLANS TO PUBLISH, IF IN FACT HE DID. IF SO, HE WOULD PRESUMABLY CONSIDER HIS ACTION IN NARROW TERMS OF HITTING OUT AT GOB, WHICH HE BLAMES FOR DISAPPEARANCE OF HIS BROTHER IN 1973 (BEFORE GEISEL TOOK OFFICE). PUBLICATION OF LIST WOULD, OF COURSE, HAVE MUCH WIDER REPERCUSSIONS. AT VERY LEAST, IT WOULD CONSIDERABLY EMBARRASS CARDINAL ARNS, WHO IN RECENT INTERVIEW WITH JORNAL DO BRASIL

STATED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, "HE (PRESIDENT CARTER) IS NOT COMING TO DISCUSS BRAZIL WITH ME, BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE ABSURD. INTERNAL QUESTIONS ABOUT BRAZIL ARE A CHALLENGE FOR JUST US. I NEVER THOUGHT OF TAKING THEM TO OTHERS" (SAO PAULO 819).

6. BEYOND EMBARRASSMENT TO CARDINAL, OF COURSE, THERE IS MATTER OF GOB REACTION, ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE MILITARY--AND THAT OF PRESIDENT GEISEL PERSONALLY--TO PUBLICATION OF MATTER THAN CAN ONLY BE EMBARRASSING TO REGIME--AND TO BRAZIL--ON EVE OF PRESIDENT'S VISIT.

7. IN THIS REGARD, CONGEN SAO PAULO REPORTS THAT A LT. COL. IN SECOND ARMY WITH WHOM CONGEN OFF HAS HAD LONG ACQUAINTANCE SAID ON MARCH 22 THAT HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT POLARIZATION OF POSITIONS WITHIN GOB CONCERNING VISIT OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH CARDINAL ARNS. LT. COL. STATED THAT HE HAD SEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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TWO REPORTS THAT HAD BEEN SENT TO THE PRESIDENT, ONE RECOMMENDING THAT GEISEL DECLARE PRESIDENT CARTER PERSONA NON GRATA FOR THE VISIT AND ANOTHER RECOMMENDING THAT BRAZIL BREAK RELATIONS WITH THE US. HE SAID THAT THE REPORTS HAD ORIGINATED WITH RADICAL ELEMENTS IN THE SECURITY SERVICES, BUT THAT THE INDIGNATION THEY REFLECTED WAS WIDELY SHARED WITHIN THE MILITARY.

8. WE HAVE CONSIDERED AND REJECTED THE OPTION OF ATTEMPTING TO PREVENT PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER AND THE CARDINAL'S LIST BECAUSE (A) WE CAN SEE LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF OUR EFFORTS REMAINING UNKNOWN TO THE GOB AND, MOST LIKELY, TO "ISTO E'S" READERSHIP (WE BELIEVE IT WOULD PROBABLY PUBLISH BOTH THE LIST AND AN ACCOUNT OF OUR EFFORTS TO PREVENT PUBLICATION), AND (B) DISCLOSURE OF SUCH EFFORTS WOULD, IN OUR VIEW, BOTH AGGRAVATE GOB ANNOYANCE AND STIMULATE SUSPICION THAT WE WERE HIDING STILL MORE DAMAGING EVIDENCE.

9. THUS, IF THE MATERIAL IS PUBLISHED AND UNLESS WASHINGTON SUGGESTS OTHERWISE, WE PLAN TO RESPOND TO ANY QUERIES, ON AN "IF ASKED" BASIS ONLY, THAT THE MATTER IS ONE WHICH ENTAILS PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE NO DIRECT KNOWLEDGE AND THAT

QUERIES CONCERNING IT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE DEPARTMENT.

10. WASHINGTON MAY WISH TO CONSIDER RESPONDING TO QUERIES, ALSO  
ON AN "IF ASKED" BASIS, ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: "THE USG,  
EITHER IN LETTERS TO THE PRESIDENT, TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
OR TO EMBASSIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, RECEIVES INFORMATION CONCERNING  
HUMAN RIGHTS WITH SOME FREQUENCY. AS IS WIDELY KNOWN, THE PROMOTION  
OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS A CENTRAL TENET OF UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY.  
IT IS CUSTOMARY AND COURTEOUS TO RESPOND TO SUCH LETTERS."  
JOHNSON

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## Message Attributes

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